

REMARKS

Claims 22-41 are pending. Claims 23 and 25-40 have been withdrawn. Claim 22 has been amended to reintroduce a feature of claim 22 as originally filed and in common with a feature of the claimed subject matter as now granted in related matter EP 0 983 131, namely that the conductive surface has a "non-zero Gaussian curvature." The importance of such a characteristic is explained throughout the specification.

Applicants would like to respectfully thank the Examiner for reconsideration of the pending claims, and request that the withdrawn claims be reconsidered upon determination of the allowability of claim 22.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC §103

Claims 22, 24 and 41 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over WO 93/19887 ("Barnes") in view of U.S. Pat. No. 5,512,154 to Rischke et al. ("Rischke"). Although not explicitly mentioned, the Examiner is presumed to have withdrawn the previous rejection over Otsuka and Blume. Applicants respectfully request that this new rejection also be reconsidered and withdrawn, in light of the following comments and above amendment.

The Examiner has already acknowledged that the Barnes reference fails to disclose passing an electrical current through an electrically conductive surface for applying a coating of liquid electrophoretic photoresist, but cites the Rischke reference as teaching applying a electrophoretic resist layer by passing an electric current through an electrically conductive surface in a photoresist bath. The Examiner's preliminary conclusion was that it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ the Rischke photoresist bath process in the Barnes foil manufacturing method. The proposed motivation for such an improvement would have been "in order to obtain a uniform coating."

First, Applicants traverse the Examiner's conclusion and presumption concerning the proposed reference combination. The Barnes reference specifically teaches away from photoresist baths in the context of his foil-forming process, stating that such baths produce troublesome effluents and have several other disadvantages over the use of a laser in an ablative

process (see, e.g., the entirety of his discussion on pages 1 and 2 of his PCT publication). The Examiner's analysis fails to contemplate the effect such teachings would have had on one of ordinary skill, considering how to improve upon Barnes' method. Certainly he or she would not have been led by such teachings of Barnes *toward* Rischke's photoresist bath, but would rather have been led toward some other improvements that would not have obtained such disadvantages. Furthermore, the Examiner's proposed motive is without support in either reference, as there is nothing to suggest that there would have been any improvement in coating uniformity by employing Rischke's bath process in place of Barnes' ablation process.

Second, Applicants have further amended claim 22 to specifically recite that the 'conductive surface is of a particular curvature, to which shape the mask is shaped to conform for radiation exposure. There is nothing in the cited references that would suggest the processing of a surface of non-zero Gaussian curvature, nor anything that would point to the desirability of such a surface curvature in the claimed process. There is some discussion in Barnes teaching how to make "arched" razor foils (see, e.g., example 3 spanning pages 16 and 17), but there is nothing that would suggest non-Gaussian curvature. In fact, the process employed in his example, namely first forming a patterned, metallized film by laser etching and then forming the film about an arched mandrel for electroforming, suggests a simpler arch shape, as he shows in Figs. 8 and 9.

Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are all in condition for immediate allowance, which action is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner be inclined to allow only claim 22 and all claims that depend therefrom, either directly or indirectly, Applicants will promptly consider the cancellation of claims 32-37 and 40.

No charges are believed due. However, if any fees are due, they are being paid concurrently herewith on the Electronic Filing System (EFS) by way of Deposit Account authorization. Please apply all charges or credits to Deposit Account No. 06-1050, referencing Attorney Docket No. 02894-569002.

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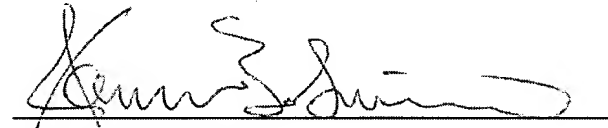
Respectfully submitted,

Date:

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